

## The Family

### THE BIRD STUDENTS.

By Grace Maynard Buck.

I attended a bird lecture,

A book on birds I read.

A large amount of knowledge

Was stored within my head.

Impressed, inspired and filled with zeal

By many learned words,

I decided to become a close

Observer of the birds.

A cup of water and some crumbs

Beneath my window sill

I placed, determined that the birds

Should come and take their fill.

With opera-glasses ready

I hid behind the curtain.

That I should ever tame the birds

To me seemed almost certain.

I watched all through the morning,

And again at dewy eve,

And not a single bird appeared,

And I began to grieve.

And I was greatly mystified,

Until at last I found

That another close observer

Was there upon the ground.

For Pussy drank the water,

And Pussy ate each crumb.

So I think it was no wonder

That the birdies did not come.

—Christian Intelligencer.

### JANET THE INTERPRETER.

By Edith Sykes Gibbs.

Janet had picked up the whip and was clucking to Napoleon, when Uncle William came running from the barn with rather a sheepish expression on his round, ruddy face. He extracted a letter from an inner pocket, and handed it to his niece without a word of explanation. None was needed. Uncle William's habits of forgetfulness were to be endured, not cured.

"Uncle William!" exclaimed Janet reproachfully. "How long has that been in your possession? It's from the teachers' agency, too, and you vowed last night that there wasn't any mail."

She ripped off the envelope with more despatch than neatness, while Uncle William secured Napoleon's fly-net with a piece of twine and picked up the lines which Janet had carelessly dropped.

"I'll forgive you this time!" she exclaimed, brightly, looking up. "If this had been another offer of a position to teach geography, vocal culture, gymnastics, economics, arithmetic, logic, astronomy, and other heterogeneous subjects, of which I have no more idea than the man in the moon, it would have spoiled my day, and I should have worried myself sick thinking maybe I ought to try for it. But here is actually something like what I want—my beloved German comes first, with a little Latin and English; I think I might manage that. But O Uncle Billy, you incorrigible man, you've been carrying this round for two days, as I see by the postmark! Well, I

must start. Did you spread the duster over the strawberries? Give me the lines, then."

Uncle William lifted two more crates into the light open wagon and fastened the tailboard.

Janet saluted him merrily with her whip, and rattled down the lane with all the pleasure of novelty which a city girl in the country enjoys.

"She turns the curves

With graceful swerves

And apoplectic toots,"

she sang, bending low, that her broad, stiffly starched sun-hat might not catch in the overhanging branches of a gum-tree. The offer that she had just received filled her with renewed hope, for after several months of effort Janet was becoming discouraged.

Most of her classmates at college had secured positions through agencies before their graduation. But Janet had determined to teach only German, in which she was very proficient, and one or two accompanying subjects.

"They seem determined to make me teach arithmetic," she complained to Aunt Mary, when she came out to the farm after commencement for a much-needed rest, "particularly mental arithmetic—how I always did hate it! If Susan has sixteen and two-thirds apples, and John has fourteen, for which he paid ten cents, how much more per apple will Susan get if she sells hers for twenty-five cents? Mercenary children! I never did approve of those in the arithmetic book! Always bartering!"

So Janet sang merrily as Napoleon jogged evenly on to the village and rejoiced at the thought of the letter in her pocket.

"If only Uncle William hadn't forgotten it," she said to herself. "Somebody's sure to get in an application before me, and they probably won't give it to me, anyway, because I look so young." She slapped Napoleon viciously, and her face lost some of its brightness. "I never before in my life felt a desire for an advanced age. Now I am longing to look older than I am, and soon I'll want to look younger than my years!"

The village was in sight, and Janet resolved to think no more about her worries until her business was over. She was bringing in several crates of fresh strawberries for her uncle. Janet knew most of his customers by this time, and in spite of her alleged incapacity for arithmetic, delighted in going about the small town to sell to them. The country people were all so cordial and took such an unaffected interest in Uncle William's niece from the city that she felt a welcome everywhere.

She was especially fond of Mrs. Jackson, a great friend of her Aunt Mary. As she stopped at Mrs. Jackson's gate, that lady came running out, followed by a tall, gray-haired man, whom she introduced as her brother, Mr. Heywood.

"Henry, just look at these strawberries!" she exclaimed. "Miss Janet, my brother just stopped off yesterday afternoon for a flying trip, on his way through to New York, and I insisted on his staying all night on purpose to take some of your uncle's strawberries back to my sister. I knew you would be in before train-time, and such berries are not for sale in the city at any price."

Mr. Heywood was delighted with the

strawberries, and took all that were left.

Janet determined to go to the post-office to write her application at once, for she knew the value of promptness in such cases. As is customary in many country towns, the post-office and station were one. When she drove up to the platform, she saw a small boy sitting on the baggage-truck, crying bitterly. She jumped out, and running up to the child, took him in her arms, for Janet could not bear to see any one in pain. To her surprise, he turned up to her a tear-stained face, and began to jabber in German.

"Mutter! Mutter!" seemed to be his chief cry, and Janet thought he must be lost until she heard the voice of a woman inside the station building, in altercation with some one.

When she entered the door, leading her charge, her first impression was that the room was full of children. There seemed to be any number of them, of all sizes, and in their midst stood a large, helpless woman, tears rolling down her cheeks as she gesticulated despairingly before the perplexed station-agent, and poured forth rapid volumes of German, which apparently produced no effect beyond mystified shakes of the head on his part, and desultory wailing among the children, who felt that something was wrong.

"Kann ich doch helfen? Can I help?" said Janet, going quickly up to her. The distraught woman turned with a cry of relief and joy, and the small boy ran and seized his mother's hand.

In a few moments Janet had succeeded in establishing some calm. The woman poured out all her troubles more rapidly than Janet had imagined it possible for any one to talk, and the station-agent retired, overawed by her ability to understand "such gibberish," as he politely termed it.

The woman was Frau Bandeweg. She and her children had landed from Germany a few days before. They were going to join the father, who had been making a home for them in Birdville, a manufacturing town several miles farther out the line.

A German woman had put them on the right train, but the conductor had misunderstood, and put them off at Burdell at night. It was late, the ticket-agent had gone, and they had spent the night at the station.

Such, very briefly, was her story, as Janet gathered it scrap by scrap.

In the midst of all the explanation, Mrs. Jackson's brother entered. He stared, astonished, at Janet, who, flushed and excited but fully competent and answering the woman's questions and soothing the smallest girl, who had begun to cry from sheer fright and nervous strain.

His bow was courteous, although his look was surprised. He bought his ticket and settled himself, with a newspaper and his strawberries, just outside the door.

Birdville was only fifteen miles farther on, Janet explained to the woman. The train was due in ten minutes, and she would get the necessary tickets, put her on it, and tell the conductor where to put her off. How many children were there, and for how many would she have to get tickets?

There were Wilhelm and Frederick and Ferdinand and Louise and Rosie and